

**LETTER OF GENERAL KM CARIAPPA, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF,  
TO THE OFFICERS OF THE INDIAN ARMY - 01 MAY 1950**

"As I have often told you all, I have nothing but admiration for the very satisfactory way in which you have all carried out your respective tasks in the few years we have been a free country.

I know most of us are holding responsible appointments with very little experience behind us. However, I am very pleased to see that nearly every one has done, and is doing, his bit to my entire satisfaction. There have been a few disappointments, but then of course that obtains in any Army.



I have told you all time and again, that we are the pioneers of our Army and, as pioneers, we must make sacrifices, personal and collective, to lay a really sound foundation upon which the edifice of the Army can be built so that we leave a legacy for the future officers of our Army who will always thank us for all that we have done for them. I know it can be done. Nothing is impossible if only we really get down to it as officers and gentlemen in the carrying out of our duties.

It must be your constant endeavour to see that you are upto date in military teachings. This calls for extensive and continuous study. Do NOT waste your valuable time on useless pursuits. Plan your time in such a manner that you allot adequate portion of it for study without forgetting time for recreation and relaxation. You must take part in organised games, individually and with your men.

Please do NOT get into the despicable habit of becoming rank conscious. Take what job is given to you. Do NOT ask for jobs. Give your best, you're very best, at all times. We have all got to do this if we want to serve our Army and our country.

I would like you to make quite certain that you do not over do your amusements. Do not indulge in lavish entertainment. I would like to see the Mess life kept up with all its dignity, propriety and correctness. Do NOT make your Messes cheap by inviting all and sundry to your parties. I regard Messes as training ground for officers of all ranks for discipline, comradeship, teamwork and building up one's character. Make quite certain the Mess is treated as a home for the officers of the unit.

There seems to be a good deal of misinformed talk about promotions, appointments and transfers. Promotions are made according to seniority compatible with efficiency of the officer. I assure you, as far as I am concerned, there is NO 'bhai bandi'.

Appointments are made on the principle of 'A square peg in a square hole and a round peg in a round hole'. The mere factors of seniority and any special staff qualifications alone do NOT

entitle one for consideration for every appointment that falls vacant. All selections are made after due consideration of the officers' suitability professionally.

I give this matter my personal attention.

As you know, our troops have always been magnificent in their sense of loyalty to the Army and the country. To ensure that this state continues, personal attention of every officer to the welfare of the men placed under his command is vital. Their needs are simple. If the 'Jawan' feels that he has an officer who is professionally efficient, is a gentleman and a person in whom he can place his confidence to safeguard his personal and domestic interests, we officers will have gone a very long way to ensure the man's loyalty to the Army and our Government.

I want you all to know your men thoroughly, attend to their needs promptly and effectively, inquire about their domestic matters, take steps to redress justifiable grievances and make them feel that they are much better individuals as soldiers than any one outside the Army. Their food and pay and allowances must be checked regularly. They should not be called upon to do things which are not their duty. Treat them as gentlemen and human beings and NOT as machines.

Above all, you must set a personal example in matters of moral integrity, honesty, truthfulness, smartness and efficiency in every thing you do by maintaining a very high standard of personal conduct and character. The 'Jawan' is a very good judge of the good and bad in his officer.

I would like you all to make every one of them feel proud to serve under you as a Commander, whatever your command. I know most of you are doing this, but there may be some who through no fault of their own but through lack of experience and guidance, may not appreciate the vital necessity of these things.

One word of warning. Do NOT overdo the 'welfare business' by providing excess of 'creature comforts'. Troops must be kept content and happy but MUST always be kept hard and efficient in their profession. They must not be made soft.

You must concentrate on ensuring that the basic training of the men you command is thorough in every respect. Do NOT be slipshod in this respect. This means your spending more time on study and training. Do NOT waste time on useless pursuits for every second you so waste in peace you will pay for in blood in times of war for the lives of the men you command are in your hands and lives are too sacred.

Please deal sympathetically with all cases of Ex-Servicemen. Remember, these Ex-Servicemen have done their stuff for the country. It is because of their grand work in the past that our

Army today enjoys the respect, confidence and affection of our people. Go out of your way to help them.

The other point is about our attitude towards the civil population. We are here to serve the People. We must make them all feel that we, as officers, are always ready to associate ourselves with them as citizens of the land in our common efforts to serve our country. Be as courteous as you can, as an officer and gentleman to those above, equal and below you. Courtesy and good manners do NOT cost you anything. Let us set an example in regard to the value of the two essential of 'courtesy' and 'good manners'.

Please do NOT get mixed up with politics. Remember, we serve the people of the country and, therefore the Govt which is put in power by the people. However now that we have a right to vote, it is imperative that all of us, officers and men, should be quite clear in our minds in regard to exercising our privilege of voting.

The strength of a country depends on the high morale of the people. If the morale of the people is low and the people are not determined to face the horrors of war, no matter how gallantly troops fight in the battlefield, success will be very hard to achieve.

It is no good our thinking in terms of 'peace' and neglecting our responsibility to provide for the 'safety and security of the country' tomorrow.

Finally, as long as you remain in the Army please give your very best in service of the country until the very last second you are in the Army, working as a loyal, well disciplined and honest member of this big team - our Army - as an Indian and with no communal feeling of any kind whatever.

Please do NOT allow the virus of communalism to get into the Army. Communalism is a most destructive parasite, which if allowed to grow in the Army, will spell disaster for the country.

I feel absolutely certain, with NOT an iota of doubt in my mind, that all officers in my team, of which I have the proud privilege and the honor today of being the Captain, will help me in the matters I have stated above to see that we have a first class Army in all its aspects.

I wish you all the best of luck.

**AHQ New Delhi 1 May 1950.**